

Written by Bill B

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LEE FIELDS is proud to call himself a proper old school soul man. He's been in the business for almost 50 years. He's had ups and downs but he's still going and stronger and more popular than ever. Indeed he's about to unleash a brand new album. 'It Rains Love' is set for release on April 5th, so what better time to, find out a little more about Mr Fields.... a singer held in esteem by savvy soul fans but a unknown in the mainstream, so we started by asking Lee to tell us a bit about his background....

I won a talent show at my high school in 1964 and from there joined a band called the Dave Bryant 5. My intention wasn't to become a singer; I wanted to be a businessman. I was about 13 yrs old and I had a paper round but I loved to singing along with my transistor radio. A buddy of mine dared me that I wouldn't enter this talent show and the band that was playing there hired me. My early heroes and influences were Sam Cooke, Jimmy Hughes, Beatles, and O.V Wright. I was always interested in music that moved people.

So what was it really like for an aspirational soul, singer in the 60s and 70s – the so called Golden Age of Soul... was it so golden for people like you? And why do you think you never quite made it to soul's major league?

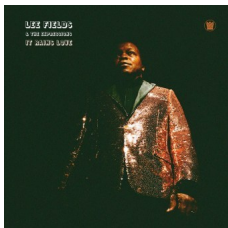
It was just good music at the time, about things that people related to. Today I feel like the media is so big and they can dictate that this is what people like. I think the public has lost its sensitivity to what they truly like, they just listen to what the mass media says. It seems people liked what they liked back then a bit more, despite the media. Everybody today is much more susceptible to what the media suggests. I think I appeal to people who really think for themselves and are not as prone to programming. The reason I didn't get the shine was that I'm a guy of the future. I've always been like that. Not to be pompous, just something important to note. I do sing of that time, but my thoughts and feeling were of the future, therefore I was never in sync with the time. The stuff I was writing about, I was always referring to the future. I don't regret my views because I had a great life and I'm having a great time now. Many people who got to shine back then are talking about that time still today, but I'm talking about today! My heyday is now! I wouldn't do it any other way.

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In the 80s, though, I believe you hit tough times... you almost quit ... would you like to talk about that? How did you get through?

Well, I started reading the bible. I've got to say there were moments in my life where I had very deep thoughts and doubts of whether I would sustain myself in that moment. In the 80's I was feeling discouraged because my efforts weren't doing what I thought they should have been doing. So I picked up the bible. I read the bible but many others might have read a different spiritual book to guide them. I believe anything spiritual can give you a real lift and strength when your spirit is down. At the time I believed it was all about what you accomplished in life, but in the 80's I accomplished spiritual awareness. I realized I didn't need the material things I thought I did. I realized it's all about what we learn spiritually.



Now the new album.... how long has it been in preparation?

Leon (producer Leon Michels) and I amazingly put everything together in about a month! He's a great guy with a great beautiful family. He's in a very serene place and the only thing left to do was create, so we took advantage of that and just had fun. I think it's really important to have a lot of fun doing what you do, and this record was a lot of fun to create. If a person does that the music stays fun and new and fresh, it allows me to be as free with my soul as I can. An artist should look at everything for what it is and shouldn't make anyone think anything. An artist should be free like the branches on the tree, they grow in whatever way they want.

Sounds an interesting way of working... tell us a little more about Leon Michels and who are the musicians on the set.... your road band?

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Leon Michaels is a genius! Working with someone like him is amazing. Yes, the Expressions did the whole record with me. Every time we walk in together to do a project, the Expressions do what they do. We're all free thinkers and I like to be around them then everything isn't boxed in.

Why did you choose 'It Rains Love' as the title track?

Well actually Leon and I wrote the song, but I didn't choose it as the title track. But I do believe if it rained love that would be a beautiful thing, if everybody got soaking wet with love. We got to get love across to people because love is essential for the survival of all. I try to write songs that keeps the reality in check that people can identify with and get on to the next day with.

I'm guessing that 'God Is Real 'is another focus track?

'God Is Real' I didn't know if Leon was gonna put it on the album but I'm glad he did. You know I believe god is thought, the energies that give us a sense of the world. God is complete thought of everything possible to think of. Everything is possible with god and we are a possibility. The body is no less than a centre for the 5 senses. I think we are in an everlasting dream and god is the dreamer. if we really take that for what it is then we dream along with the dreamer.

A lot to think about there... now your special sound..... how would you describe the sound of the album ... is it what you hoped for? And how different it to when you started out?

The sound of this album I would describe as a true soul record but I haven't heard anything like this particular album because of the peripheral of thought that it covers. It goes from secular to spiritual and I think Leon did a brilliant job of guiding me to this point. This album is covering all things that are happening today, and 50 years ago when I started it was a different world. This album is giving a hint of possibility and hope that everything is going to be alright. It brings two worlds together by bridging the spiritual and the secular. This album is touching on a whole lot of delicate things but not getting into to a point where it's too deep.

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